

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services
and the Executive Director Children's Services,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)
on 12 September 2023**

Children's Social Care Q1 Performance Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Data and intelligence around practice outcomes are key in driving continuous practice improvement.
- 1.2 This report is to provide Members of the Committee with an overview of performance in Children's Social Care. At this time, reporting has changed due to the move to a new case management system, Mosaic. Since the new performance framework is in the first phases of development, this report will use the data routinely provided to the Children's Development Board along with information from our operational reports. Previously, reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been based on monthly reporting from the now obsolete TED case management system.

2.0 Background

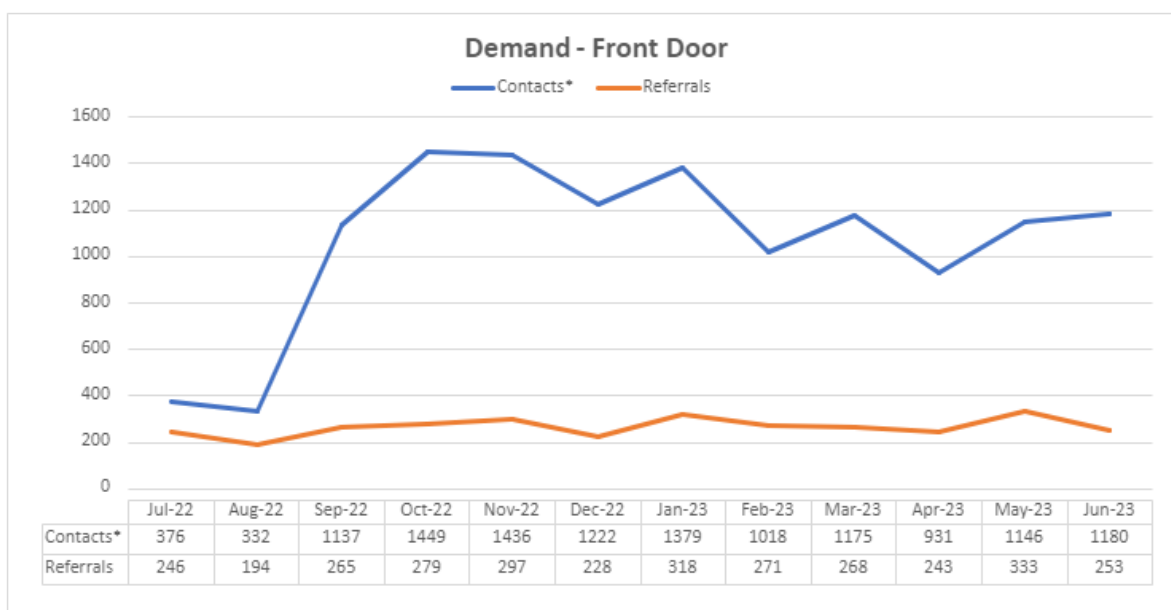
- 2.1 Children's Social Care migrated to a new case management system (Mosaic) on 14th November 2022 and are working with Business Intelligence to redevelop reporting across the board, encompassing Annex A and inspection readiness, statistical returns, operational reports, and the performance framework.
- 2.2 The programme of works is extensive, however, conversations with our peers in Local Authorities both regionally and nationally have assured us that Barnsley is not unusual in its position post-migration and that the timelines in place for the development and implementation of new reporting are in line with their experiences.

3.0 Current Position - Data shown for Q1 (April – June 2023)

- 3.1 Whilst development is ongoing, Heads of Service and Service Managers maintain management oversight and assurance using a combination of highlight reports provided by Team Managers, and operational reports which report on information from Mosaic, which are reviewed and discussed at fortnightly Head of Service performance clinics.
- 3.2 A new operational tool is also being developed which allows workers and managers to have access to up-to-date information. This will enable managers to have oversight of their performance including current and forthcoming activity and enable them to identify areas of risk and monitor work undertaken.
- 3.3 We are identifying issues and alerting managers of any data quality issues, using various methods to target those individuals who need support and challenge.

Demand

- 3.4 At the Front Door, the number of contacts at the end of June is 1180, slightly higher than the end of May (1146), and April (931). There are also an additional 487 'Information Only Contacts' in June which deal with requests for information from partners.
- 3.5 The number of referrals is generally proportional to the number of contacts received. At the end of June, the number of referrals was 253, lower than the number in May (333) which was the highest figure in the 12 months previous.



3.6 The number of Children open to the Service increased again in June to 1871 from 1816 in May and 1696 in April. This increase in demand when compared with data from June 2022, shows there are an additional 453 cases now open and impacting on service activity and capacity. We know that from September 22 we saw a significant increase in contact to the front door from 333 in August 22 to 1148 in September 22. This increase was due to the process for recording contacts changing in September.

3.7 The number of Children in Care at the end of June is 410, a reduction of 1 from May, but significantly higher June last year (316).

The number of Care Leavers open to service is 102 at the end of June which is higher than the previous month (95). The number of Care Leavers open to service remains largely stable over time with small fluctuations.

3.8 At the end of June, the number of admissions of children into care is 18, increasing from 15 in May. Since April 2022 this figure has fluctuated between 10 and 26.

Performance and Compliance

3.9 The percentage of decisions made on all contacts and referrals in one working day at the end of June is 51% against the target of 80%. This is an improvement on the previous Month (May 41%). The % outcome in 2 working days increases to 77% and in 3 working days to 89%.

3.10 The percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a referral was 27.10% at the end of June, against a target of 20%, this is above the National Average of 21.5%. Because of the fluctuations in this measure month by month we will be introducing a year-to-date figure.

3.11 There has been another increase in the number of assessments undertaken in June (344), with 35 more assessments than in May. Compared to this point in 2022 assessments are higher by 130. 83.7% of assessments were authorised within 45 days in June, against a target of 80%. This represents a drop in performance compared to May (90.5%) that is mainly due to an increase in the volume of work.

3.12 In June, 43% of children who had an initial assessment were visited within 5 working days against a target of 80%. This is a decrease compared to May (69%). Children where visits have not been possible have management oversight recorded on file to account for the delay.

3.13 The percentage of S47 investigations leading to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) increased to 46.10% in June, from 38.7% in May. The % of children whose ICPC was held within 15 working days was 81%, a reduction on the figure of 93% in May but still above our target of 80% and in line with comparators.

- 3.14 Of the 47 Children starting a Child Protection Plan in June 2023, none of them had a plan within the last 2 years. Any children subject to a second or subsequent plan within 2 years are reviewed to understand the circumstances leading to the repeat plan.
- 3.15 Compliance for up-to-date plans in June shows some improvements but performance is still below our target of 80%. Investigations into the number of plans not up to date show these figures are not reflective of the number completed. It has been identified that workers are not saving plans accurately and work with front line workers is underway to address this.

Up to Date Plan	May 2023	June 2023
Children in Need	64%	59%
Children on a CPP	59%	53%
Children Looked After	50%	57%
Care Leavers	60%	67%

- 3.16 The % of children visited in timescale shows some fluctuations over the past 3 months. We are making changes to Mosaic which will allow us to reflect the longer visit periods within our practice standards, this cannot yet be reflected on Mosaic. Team managers track visits to children and discuss this in supervision to ensure children are being seen and managers are assured that the majority of children are visited in line with statutory requirements, but we primarily have a recording issue. To improve recording there have been initiatives introduced such as protected time for recording.

Visits	May 2023	June 2023
Children in Need within last 4 weeks	72%	61%
Children on a CPP visited within 10 days	68%	70%
Children Looked After	87%	76%
Care Leavers within the last 8 weeks	31%	48%

- 3.17 Case Supervisions continue to be an issue across the whole of the service, all currently below the agreed target of 80%. However, there are pockets of good performance in parts of the service and an upward trajectory for case supervisions for Early Help, Children in Need, Children on a Child Protection Plan, Children Looked After and Care Leavers: -

Case Supervisions	May 2023	June 2023
Early Help	41%	51%
Children in Need	39%	54%
Children on a CPP	35%	52%
Children Looked After	49%	59%
Care Leavers	31%	48%

- 3.18 The percentage of children in care with an up to date and Quality Assured Personal Education Plan (PEP) was 79.3% in Q1, remaining below the internal target of 100%.
- 3.19 The percentage of care leavers aged 19-21 engaged in education, employment or training was 61.5%, against a target of 68% in Q1, this is a slight reduction from 62.3% in Q4, but remains above the national benchmark of 52%.
- 3.20 School attendance for children in care is measured cumulatively from the start of the academic year. Attendance at the end of Q1 was 96.2% for primary-aged children in care, decreasing from 96.6% at the end of Q4. For secondary-aged children in care, attendance decreased to 85.1% at the end of Q1, from 86% at the end of Q4.
- 3.21 Total persistent absence was 8.8% for primary-aged children in care in Q1 reducing from 10.1% in Q4. Total persistent absence was 31.1% for secondary-aged children in care in Q1, increasing from 24.2% in Q4.

3.22 1.1% of primary children in care had one or more fixed-term exclusion in Q1, reducing from 2.8 in Q4. 7.2% of secondary-aged children in care had one or more fixed-term exclusion in Q1, reducing from 11.4% in Q4.

3.23

4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

4.1 Children's Social Care and Business Intelligence will continue to work together on our agreed data and reporting priorities, with the performance framework. One of the key priorities in the Children's Development Plan is being at the forefront of that development work.

4.2 We will continue to focus on data quality and recording in Mosaic, providing a robust foundation on which to build our performance and intelligence reporting.

4.3 We will maintain the pace of ensuring inspection readiness, including Annex A reporting.

4.4 We will continue to develop operational reports to reflect what is currently happening in service, allowing Team Managers, Service Managers and Heads of Service to have management oversight, and will continue to embed these in the fortnightly Head of Service performance clinics.

5.0 Invited Witnesses

5.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from OSC:

- Carly Speechley, Executive Director, Children's Services, BMBC
- Matthew Boud, Service Director, Children's Social Care, Children's Services, BMBC
- Cllr Trevor Cave, Cabinet Spokesperson, Children's Services, BMBC

6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

6.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What area of performance are you most pleased with, and why?
- When do you anticipate the new reporting systems will be fully-developed?
- How confident are you in the accuracy of the data and reporting from the new system?
- What (if any) comparisons have been done with other local authorities on the data they collate and how it is presented in order to share and learn from good practice?
- To avoid unnecessary demands on services, is there ability to facilitate partners self-serving to obtain information, such as enabling read-only versions of records, to avoid 'information only' requests?
- What is in place to reward and support the workforce, given the increased demands on services?
- What was the reason for the sudden increase in contacts being recorded when the process for recording this changed? Did information previously being missed raise any particular concerns?
- What are the main reasons for children coming into care? Is this due to issues seen previously or are there newly emerging factors?
- What are the reasons for the increase in re-referrals? Has this been due to cases being stepped-down too early, or changes in circumstances?

- What actions could be taken by Members to assist in this work?

7.0 Background Papers and Useful Links

- Item 8b - Understanding Children's Social Care Explanatory Document

8.0 Glossary

Annex A	This consists of 11 lists of child-level data that Ofsted request from the local authority at the start of the inspection.
CIN	Child in Need
CPP	Child Protection Plan
CIC	Child in Care
CL	Care Leaver
S47	Section 47 of the Children Act 1989, allowing enquiries to be initiated where a child is suffering from or at risk of harm.

9.0 Officer Contact

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04 September 2023